

Claims

[c1] What is claimed is:

1.A telephone apparatus for use in conjunction with a computing device, the computing device executing a telephone software application for making telephone calls over the Internet, the telephone apparatus comprising:

an interface for receiving downstream audio packages from the computing device and for sending upstream audio packages to the computing device;

a voice compression/decompression circuit for decompressing the downstream audio packages received through the interface and for compressing upstream audio packages sent to the interface according to a predetermined voice compression protocol;

an audio codec for converting the decompressed downstream audio packages received from the voice compression/decompression circuit into downstream analog signals, and for converting upstream analog signals into upstream audio packages sent to the voice compression/decompression circuit; and

an analog audio interface for outputting the downstream analog signals and for receiving upstream analog sig-

nals.

- [c2] 2.The telephone apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a processor for controlling operation of the telephone apparatus.
- [c3] 3.The telephone apparatus of claim 1 wherein the audio codec conforms to the Audio Codec "97 specification.
- [c4] 4.The telephone apparatus of claim 1 wherein the predetermined voice compression protocol is a G.7xx voice compression protocol.
- [c5] 5.The telephone apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a microphone connected to the analog audio interface for inputting upstream analog signals to the telephone apparatus.
- [c6] 6.The telephone apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a speaker for outputting the downstream analog signals from the telephone apparatus.
- [c7] 7.The telephone apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a headset jack formed for receiving a plug of a headset.
- [c8] 8.The telephone apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a wireless transceiver for receiving wireless digital upstream signals from a wireless headset and for transmitting wireless digital downstream signals to the wireless

headset.

- [c9] 9.The telephone apparatus of claim 1 wherein the interface that the telephone apparatus uses to communicate with the computing device is a Universal Serial Bus (USB) interface.
- [c10] 10.The telephone apparatus of claim 1 wherein the interface that the telephone apparatus uses to communicate with the computing device is an IEEE 1394 interface.
- [c11] 11.The telephone apparatus of claim 1 wherein the interface that the telephone apparatus uses to communicate with the computing device is an Ethernet (IEEE 802.3) interface.